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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001849

SIPDIS

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LONDON FOR POL/GURNEY, NSC FOR MILLARD

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#) [BH](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: MAOISTS ATTACK POLICE INSIDE BHUTANESE

REFUGEE CAMP

Classified By: Ambassador Michael E. Malinowski for reasons 1.5 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary. On September 22, Post received reports from WFP and UNHCR that as many as 150 Maoists attacked the police post inside a Bhutanese refugee camp in Eastern Nepal, killing one unarmed police officer. No refugees were injured in the attacks. According to UNHCR, the Home Ministry has decided to withdraw all permanent police personnel from the six refugee camps. Contrary to WFP and UNHCR reports, Police sources indicate that only 10-12 Maoist assailants entered the camp. Due to the absence of reliable eye witnesses, the number of Maoist attackers has not been verified. Although the absence of a permanent police presence in the refugee camps may deter further Maoist attacks, it may also prove easier for the insurgents to recruit the young and unemployed Bhutanese refugees. End Summary.

12. (C) At approximately 2230 hours on September 21, an unverified number of Maoists attacked the main police post within the Khundunabari Bhutanese refugee camp in Eastern Nepal, killing one National Police Assistant Sub-Inspector. World Food Program Country Director Erika Jorgenson informed PolOff on September 22 that WFP field officers in Khundunabari Camp had reported that as many as 150 Maoist insurgents entered the camp late Sunday night, attacking the police post. Jorgenson indicated that Khundunabari Camp residents fear that this attack is only the beginning of more Maoist incursions into the Bhutanese refugee communities.

13. (C) The UNHCR protection officer was not present at the camps at the time of the incident, but traveled back to Jhapa the morning of September 22. Subsequently, UNHCR Deputy Country Director Thangarajah Kugathanan confirmed that 150 armed Maoists attacked the Khundunabari Camp police post. According to Kugathanan, the Home Ministry has decided to withdraw all police personnel from the refugee camps to a more secure location at District Headquarters, although the police will conduct mobile patrols in and around the camps. Kugathanan has requested guidance on this issue from UNHCR headquarters in Geneva.

14. (C) Contrary to WFP and UNHCR reports, police sources indicate that only between 10-12 Maoists entered the camp and exploded a bomb near the police post in Khundunabari Camp. The Maoists then entered the police post, killed the police officer-in-charge with a pistol shot to the temple and tied the hands of the other four police officers present. According to the police, five unarmed police personnel were deployed in each of the six Bhutanese refugee camps and were reimbursed by UNHCR.

15. (C) Comment. Security within the refugee camps has been an issue of concern for UNHCR and diplomatic missions in Nepal as reports that Maoists might attempt to recruit the young, unemployed Bhutanese refugees have increased. However, all reports of the attack have suggested that the assailants entered Khundunabari Camp from outside. Although the removal of police forces from the UNHCR camps might remove the threat of further Maoist attacks, Post is concerned that withdrawal of police forces from the camps might allow for easier infiltration by Maoist recruiters. End Comment.

MALINOWSKI